

<b>NUTRITION SERVICES DIVISION MANAGEMENT BULLETIN</b>		<b>No. 02-104</b>
<b>TO:</b>	All School Nutrition Program Sponsors	<b>ISSUE DATE:</b> May 2002
<b>ATTENTION:</b>	Food Services Director	
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Submission of Free and Reduced-Price Meal Applications by All Households	
<b>REFERENCE:</b>	United States Department of Agriculture APB: SP 02-02; Title 7, Code of Federal Regulations Section 245.5	

This Management Bulletin addresses the issue of schools requiring every household to submit a free and reduced-price meal application and is effective immediately.

The United States Department of Agriculture has notified the California Department of Education that school officials are requiring households to submit free and reduced-price meal applications, regardless of the household's wish to apply for these benefits. Requiring submission of a free and reduced-price meal application is contrary to the laws and regulations governing the school nutrition programs. A school nutrition sponsor **may not require** households to submit an application to participate in the school nutrition programs. If your school or your district has established such a policy or practice, please discontinue it immediately.

The school nutrition program federal regulations require sponsors to inform households of the availability of these programs, how to obtain meal applications, and how to apply for free and reduced-price benefits. However, neither the laws nor the regulations governing these programs require or mandate that all households apply for free and reduced-price meal benefits or participate in the school nutrition programs. Therefore, school officials shall not require households to submit an application for meal benefits.

If the school provides multiuse applications to households, the school must ensure that the procedure used allows households to apply for non-meal program benefits separately. A school or district that wants to collect income or eligibility information on all enrolled children must secure that information through means other than household applications for free and reduced-price meals.

Please share this Management Bulletin with your superintendent, principals, and business office.

If you have any questions, please contact your local Nutrition Services Division Representative, the Field Services Unit at (916) 445-0850 or (800) 952-5609, or Christine Kavooras, Program Analyst, at (916) 322-3609 or [ckavoora@cde.ca.gov](mailto:ckavoora@cde.ca.gov).

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Marilyn Briggs, Director  
Nutrition Services Division  
Assistant Superintendent of Public Instruction